

MEMORANDUM

To: Dan Ellsberg Date 12-18-63

From: BERNARD BRODIE

For the meeting tomorrow
evening.

~~A. L. Raymond~~
~~File~~

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CBS REPORTS

"McNAMARA AND THE PENTAGON"

Wednesday, Sept. 25, 1963

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REPORTER: HARRY REASONER

PRODUCER: GENE DePORIS

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REASONER:

This is the Secretary of Defense of the United States, Robert McNamara in his office in Washington. Once the President of the Ford Motor Company, he now runs the 50 billion dollar a year complex called the Pentagon. His Department absorbs 10% of the national income of this country and over half of every tax dollar. His job has been called the toughest in Washington and McNamara is the most controversial figure that has ever held the job. Walter Lippmann calls him not only the best Secretary of Defense -- but the first one who ever asserted civilian control over the military. His critics call him a con man, an IBM machine with legs, an arrogant dictator. Tonight for one hour, in a free-wheeling conversation, the Secretary of Defense talks about the TFX controversy, the chances of war by accident, Viet Nam, Russian poetry and his life among the Generals. Your philosophy is, at that point, that it is your job to make the decisions, to exercise the control?

McNAMARA:

That's my philosophy; that's also the law. But I have no hesitancy under those circumstances in making a decision. I'm charged by the law with doing it, and were I not to do so, progress would stop. And our defense would be weakened.

MUSIC

ANNOUNCER:

Now here is CBS NEWS correspondent Harry Reasoner.

REASONER:

This is the office of the Secretary of Defense. The walnut desk was once used by General Pershing. The table that holds the instruments that connect the Secretary to command posts of the atomic space age was used by General Sherman in the Civil War. The portrait behind the desk is that of the first Secretary of Defense, James Forrestal. Some people say this job killed him.

The problems of this office came into sharp and dramatic focus with the recent TFX controversy.

Mr. Secretary there's one area where I think you've been subject to more criticism than any other. It's in the area of your relations with the top officers of the service, field grade and on up. A lot of them feel downgraded by your avid interest in every area of what they're doing. Do you regard this as a necessary result of your management methods?

McNAMARA:

No. I doubt very much, as a matter of fact, that the report which you cited is a correct appraisal of their feelings. But I think it is important to recognize that progress is a function

of controversy -- or conversely, controversy is a condition necessarily associated with progress. We've made much progress in this Department in the last two and a half years.

In the first place, we have consolidated duplicating activities and there have been many in the department. One of the most significant consolidations affected the procurement activities of the several services. These services were each buying similar items, items of clothing or electrical parts, or hardware, not associated with major weapon systems and we've taken these several procurement activities and consolidated them in what is known as the Defense Supply Agency.

There was so much controversy associated with the establishment of that agency that a Congressional investigation resulted. I spent hours and hours and hours last year testifying before Congress as to the merits and wisdom of the decision. I don't think there is a single civilian or military leader of this Department today but what believes that was a magnificent step forward.

In the first year of operation of that agency which is just ending at the present time, we've been able to reduce the number of personnel over thirty-five hundred. If you can imagine that. In one single year--that's over ten percent of the total personnel. Similarly in that single year, we've been able to reduce the procurement with resultant savings of two hundred and fifty million dollars-- over a quarter of a billion dollars saved just by proper inventory management.

A second major step we've taken is in connection with what I call "eliminating goldplating." It means designing each part--designing each weapon to meet the military requirement at the lowest possible cost and the---the opportunities are immense. This is no different than many large private industrial concerns in this country---- no different way in which they carry out their programs of design, but I think

you might be interested in some of the actions we've taken. Here are two parts, for example; this is a turbine wheel from a generator in a nuclear weapons system.

This particular wheel is---is machined out of---out of stainless steel. It costs a hundred and seventy-five dollars for that single turbine wheel. We've replaced it with this---this part. This is made of molded plastic at a cost of two dollars. A hundred and seventy-five dollars---two dollars.

REASONER:

No loss in efficiency?

McNAMARA:

No loss in efficiency whatsoever. The life required is something on the order of two minutes. This is a part from a Polaris Missile firing system. Again, it's machined of stainless steel. This is the substitute part---cast from steel. This cost fifty-five dollars. This cost five dollars. Now, these are symbolic of thousands of redesigned efforts that have been undertaken, from which we think we've achieved to date savings of about a hundred million dollars per year. Tremendous opportunities exist there and as I say, this is a practice that's common in many large industrial corporations in the country and it's something that we can do much more up here. We've also changed the procurement practices of the Department and this I think may be of some interest to you. For a number of years, there was a trend to cost plus contracts in the Defense Department. I'll try and sketch this out for you ^{perhaps} to illustrate what I wish to say. If, on this chart I were to graph the percentage of our contracts that were awarded on the basis of reimbursing the contractor for his costs and in addition, paying to him a fixed profit, you would find that in 1955, these cost-

plus contracts were about nineteen percent of total contracts and that increased to about thirty-eight percent---it doubled between 1955 and March of 1961. These are the kinds of contracts that provide no incentive whatsoever to either the Defense Department, or to the contractor, to minimize the cost of production, because the government by contract, has obligated itself to pay to the contractor whatever his cost may be and the most conscientious contractor is under no incentive to reduce those costs. We have, since 1961, reduced that percentage to twenty-one percent and we believe we can take it down to twelve percent. 1963, it was twenty-one percent. By 1966, we think it will be twelve percent. Why is it important? For every dollar of contract that we change from a cost-plus basis to either a fixed price or providing some incentive to the contractor, we save ten cents. Our audits have shown this. We propose to shift six billion dollars a year from cost-plus contracts to either fixed price, or price incentive contracts, with resultant savings of over six hundred million dollars a year, and we're well along the way to achieving it. Now further, there are other

illustrations of the same point. We've had an immense build-up in the military strength of this country in the last two and a half years. But, again, every major decision affecting it was born of controversy. And I don't think that you would expect otherwise. These are important decisions. They do involve the lives and fortunes of millions of our people. They do involve the very foundations of our national defense.

During that period of time we've increased the number of warheads in our strategic nuclear alert forces by 100%. We've increased the size of the tactical nuclear forces in Western Europe by 60%. We've increased the number of combat-ready army divisions by 45%. We've increased the number of tactical fighter wings by 30%. We've increased the expenditures on new navy ship construction to modernize the fleet by 100%. We've increased by over 300% the size of the forces trained to counter the campaigns of subversion, covert aggression, *guerrilla* ~~grill~~ operations that Khrushchev and the Communists are placing so much emphasis on.

Now you can see the range -- thirty to one hundred to three hundred -- and you can imagine the arguments and the controversy that has been associated with the decision to make this thirty and this one hundred and this three hundred. One of the points that was involved was the reduction of \$14 billion -- \$14 billion, if you can imagine -- not million but billion -- in the budget submitted by the military services for fiscal '64, the year we're currently in. They were submitted at a total cost of about \$67 billion, and the fiscal budget we submitted to the Congress was \$53 billion -- \$14 billion less.

REASONER:

One Congressman, I think, called you Mr. I-Have-All-The-Answers McNamara. And there's been suggestion from some Congressmen that you come up there, in spite of the weight of their experience, prepared to give them simple little lessons in things. Is that your attitude?

McNAMARA:

No, perhaps they don't know how much I don't know, and there's much indeed. I do make a serious effort to prepare myself properly for these Congressional discussions. I expend considerable time and effort on preparing for these Congressional sessions. I suppose I spend perhaps a hundred, or a hundred and twenty hours in testifying before Congress

each year and each hour of testimony requires three to four hours of preparation, so I hope to have the answers to the questions they ask. I think they have a right to expect I will have the answers. If I don't have the answers, I shouldn't be up there.

REASONER:

What about the contention, though, that this not only represents proper preparation, but that your attitude is sometimes arrogant. You never admit you were wrong. Have you ever been wrong, sir?

McNAMARA:

Oh, yes, indeed. I'm not going to tell you. If you don't know -- oh, on countless occasions.

REASONER:

Sir, you had a kind of a honeymoon, a lot of new office-holders do, and I think yours was longer and sweeter probably than many had. And, then inevitably there began to be conflict, and I suppose it's best symbolized by what is in the headlines as the TFX controversy. Could you explain the TFX story to me?

McNAMARA:

There were two major controversial decisions associated with the TFX. The first was related to the question, could we develop one airplane, a single airplane to serve the needs of the two services, the Air Force and the Navy, both of which are scheduled to utilize

this plane, and understand ^{this} ~~that~~, I'd like to tell you, that when I first came into the Department in January 1961, I was tremendously impressed by the variety of weapons systems, and from this variety, we suffered a number of penalties. It was necessary to predict, separately, the spare parts requirements, the maintenance requirements, the munition requirements, for each of these several types, and as might have been expected, errors were made in the projections, and the result was that operational readiness was adversely affected. Moreover, the --- the tremendous range of types obviously increased the development costs, and the procurement costs, so it became quite clear that if variety served a purpose, it nonetheless brought with it two substantial costs, one a cost in lesser reliability, and the other a cost in larger expenditures. And I concluded, to the extent practical, it would be wise to reduce that variety, to consolidate, to in every way possible, utilize one weapon system in lieu of two. It was generally believed that this was impossible. The missions of the two aircraft differed to the point where one plane could not serve the two missions. However, after a year of intensive debate, I think both Services, both their military and civilian

leaders, concluded that one plane could serve the purpose, and we agreed, therefore, on the TFX, as that plane. This will save a billion dollars at a minimum. It will lead to a substantially higher reliability. We will have only one set of parts to stock throughout the world. There will be many incidental savings, the great variety of types of weapon systems has led to a tremendous obsolescence of parts and other logistical equipment. We have, today, for example, in this Department, excess parts in inventory, with a value of over twelve billion dollars, and of that twelve billion dollars, four to five billion is associated with excess aircraft parts. You would always expect a certain obsolescence of parts for aircraft, but you wouldn't expect four to five billion dollars worth of obsolescence. It would have been substantially less, I'm sure, had there been fewer aircraft to service. The second controversy was over the question of the award of the contract to General Dynamics for that single airplane. A number of companies competed for the TFX contract, a design competition was held. It was narrowed down rather quickly to two competitors, Boeing and General Dynamics. Those two competed through a

series of evaluations. The designs of the two contracts submitted by the two contractors were reviewed by a large evaluation group, set up by the two Services. The evaluation board of two hundred and thirty-five individuals spent over two hundred and fifty thousand hours, if you can imagine it, making their appraisal. They finally concluded there was little to choose between the two contractors. This then was the problem presented to the---the two service secretaries--- Secretary Korth of the Navy and Secretary Zuckert of the Air Force. They both concluded upon further examination however, that our primary objectives which are to increase combat readiness and to reduce cost, could best be met by awarding the contract to General Dynamics. They so recommended. I reviewed the entire problem and concluded they were correct. I made the final decision and the final responsibility was mine. I haven't seen anything in the ten months of investigation that would lead me in the slightest to change that decision.

REASONER: It was true, though, that though the services reported no significant differences that they did recommend Boeing?

McNAMARA: Certain of the leaders of the services recommended Boeing. That was true of Admiral Anderson, for example. It was true of General LeMay, and I think for reasons that they considered very valid. They were looking at certain of the operational performance characteristics of the aircraft, and they quite properly, placing emphasis on those, concluded that Boeing had a slight edge. It wasn't a great edge, but a slight edge in that respect.

REASONER: One question that's been brought up again and again, and I know you've replied to it, but I'd like to ask it. It has been contended that the basic decision for General Dynamics perhaps quite properly reflected an economic and geographical consideration?

McNAMARA: No, certainly not. The law quite specifically forbids awarding contracts based on such considerations, and they didn't influence this contract in the slightest. By law, we are required to award contracts to the contractor who can provide the best product within the time required and at the lowest price, and those are the only standards we apply here.

REASONER: It's also been said many times that politics entered in, that you, in effect, were taking the heat for a White House decision.

McNAMARA: Well, you can examine that from a variety of points of view. You know, I've been a Republican for many, many years, so that when you talk about politics entering in it, it's hard to say whose politics. In any case, I can say without any qualification whatsoever, that no political considerations influenced the award of this contract.

REASONER: I'd like to put a question that relates to the TFX, but also has more general implications, and I'd like to put it very carefully. In the TFX, certainly your decision was against the wishes of the Chief of Naval Operations and the Chief of the Air Force and several of their top evaluators who are concerned in the project. That case, I think, is typical of some cases that do exist, where there is a resentment against you by top military men. You must be aware that this exists, and what do you say about it?

McNAMARA:

Well, I wouldn't use the same terms as you did, but I don't feel a resentment. I think there are differences of opinion and I think these are to be expected, frankly, because in that particular instance General Lemay and Admiral Anderson were looking at the problem from a somewhat narrower point of view than I was, and I think this was appropriate; that's their job. They are my military advisers, they're not my technical advisers, they're not my financial advisers. They are looking at the problem from the point of view of their individual service, and this leads to a difference in conclusion, a difference in opinion on a particular issue. So controversy develops out of such differences. Exchange of views, and forceful presentation of views, I think, tends to throw light on the truth and this is what I am seeking. So I encourage the exchange of views and encourage the controversy. I, of course, reserve the right and as a matter of fact have the responsibility by law to make a decision, and that's what I did there.

REASONER:

Art Buchwald wrote a humorous column about this kind of thing and about how the Pentagon encourages statements by Generals outside -- or, before Congress outside the Pentagon and rewards

them with sending them up to Greenland to check on the weather supply or rather get the Gooney Birds off Midway Island.

There is some basis for that kind of comment. The Chief of Naval Operations wasn't reappointed. The Chief of the Air Force is serving a one-year term. Are those events connected with their independence?

McNAMARA:

Absolutely not. There's no basis, I think, for Art's comment. I happen to be a great fan of his, although I would disagree with the conclusions of that particular satire.

REASONER:

Each of these controversies that involve a change of mind enforced on the military means that you, in effect, are imposing your will on maybe a man who's been in the Air Force thirty years.

McNAMARA:

I'm delighted you phrased it that way, because, of course, that is the commonly understood point of view, and it's just wrong. It isn't a civilian decision forced on the military. In no single instance that I can recall associated with one of these major controversies have all of the Joint Chiefs of Staff been on one side of the issue and all of the civilians on the other side of the issue. Quite the contrary is the case. On almost every one of these major issues that I can think of, both

the military and the civilian leadership has been split. And this is to be expected. It simply means that you have people looking at the problem from different points of view. But I have no hesitancy under those circumstances in making a decision. I'm charged by the law with doing it, and were I not to do so, progress would stop, and our defense would be weakened.

REASONER: You are confident that you could, in a given case, absorb the knowledge that you need to absorb to make a decision in a military matter?

McNAMARA: I am confident that I can call upon expert advisors to lay out full appraisals of the alternatives open to me, and I hope I'm conscientious enough to apply myself to study an analysis of those appraisals, so that I can make a reasoned, ~~and~~ intelligent decision.

REASONER: This, in effect, is why, I suppose, some people have said that not only are you the strongest Secretary of Defense but the first Secretary of Defense, that the others acted as umpires between the services and ambassadors to the Congress.

McNAMARA:

This may represent perhaps a difference in philosophy of management. It may well be the case. I think there are two philosophies of management that every manager must choose between. One is what I would call the passive judicial role: You sit behind this desk -- it's a large desk -- the papers flow across it -- and they'll flow across it because only you have the authority to make certain decisions and the decisions must come to you for signature, and there are boxes and boxes of pieces of paper. And one could spend a full day just sitting here and reading the paper and signing on the signature line.

This is, as I say, a judicial role -- it's a passive role. I don't believe in that. My own strong belief is a manager should be an aggressive leader, an active leader, asking questions, suggesting alternatives, proposing objectives, stimulating progress; it's this, I think, that causes our nation to grow, grow in strength and grow in purpose. And this is the role I'm trying to fill.

REASONER:

Mr. Secretary, what kind of changes have happened in the last few years in military concepts? What do you think is the most outstanding change?

McNAMARA:

I think, perhaps, it's a reflection of the technological advance that has led the Soviet Union to acquire nuclear weapons, and the means for delivering those weapons over long distances, and perhaps this can best be explained and understood in relation to what I would call the spectrum of political and military aggression. Maybe I can draw this. If one thinks of political and military aggression from the Communist bloc, ranging from actions of low intensity that might be represented by the left hand side of the scale, to actions of a high intensity at the right, then I think that the left one would have such pressures as political interference with the movement of goods and of personnel, say, from West Germany into Berlin; interference in the form of delays at the custom check points on the Autobahns; delays in passing rail traffic through on the railroads; fictitious road ~~repairs~~ that delay

convoys, et cetera. And then one builds up to intensity represented by harassment of Allied traffic in the air corridors between West Germany and --- and Berlin, for example, and from there up to such actions as the Communist attack on --- on South Korea, and going beyond that, to the Communist drive to subvert the governments, the established governments of Southeast Asia, and the introduction of missiles into Cuba, and so on, up until large scale, or potential large scale conventional attacks by the Communists on Western Europe, and, finally, at the extreme end, the strategic nuclear attack on the United States. If this then represents the spectrum of aggression, the question is, how may we deter these potential Communist actions? We've had in this country, as you well know, nuclear superiority since the end of the last war. As a matter of fact, for a decade after the war, we had a near nuclear monopoly, and yet, during that period, the Communists did attack South Korea, and since that time we've had a clear nuclear superiority. And, yet, they have exerted pressures, political pressures to delay the movement of goods and people to West Berlin. They have harassed the traffic at various times in the

nineteen fifties, and even more recently in the air corridor. They have applied pressure to Berlin. They did build a wall separating East and West Berlin, preventing the free movement of Berliners from one section of their city to another. They have tried to subvert the governments of Southeast Asia. So I think it's very clear that if one thinks of this entire spectrum, there are portions of it that reflect actions that are not deterred by superior nuclear power, whether it be a monopoly as we had for an extended period, or whether it simply represents current superiority as we have today. And perhaps one could draw a line through the spectrum and say that to the left of that line is represented the --- the Communist aggression, political or military, that could be deterred not by strategic nuclear forces, but perhaps by some other kind of force, and to the right of the line are the actions that could be deterred by superior nuclear power. But it's this area of the spectrum that we have not deterred successfully, and I suspect that this area may be growing slightly, this line may have moved slightly to the right as the Soviets, during the past fifteen years, have built up their nuclear power. In any event, there is a wide area

of the spectrum that has not been deterred by superior nuclear power. And I think in this context, it might be interesting to talk briefly about Khrushchev's theory of war, if you wish to do so. You may remember that very, very significant speech that he made January 6 in 1961, when he categorized war into three classes, and he spoke of thermonuclear wars, what he called limited wars, the conventional weapons, and wars of aggression, or subversion. As to thermonuclear wars, he strongly urged that these no longer be considered a possible tool in the Communist arsenal, because he recognized that were the Communists to engage in a thermonuclear war, their society would be destroyed. There was no possible way for them to win such a war. He commented on limited wars that these were very likely to lead to thermonuclear wars, and, therefore, they, too, were dangerous, but when he came to the wars of aggression, covert aggression, subversion, these he strongly urged be used as a tool to advance Communism toward its objective - world domination.

REASONER:

He called them wars of national liberation?

McNAMARA:

He called them wars of national liberation, and I have used the term "wars of subversion" and "covert aggression," because thats exactly what they are, and I think they're best illustrated, today, perhaps, by the attack on the established government of South Vietnam. In any event, for all of these actions on that left hand section of the spectrum, we need a wide range of forces, ranging all the way from our special anti-guerrilla forces, through to our modern high-speed tactical Fighters, capable of conventional action in any theater in the world.

REASONER:

Does this commit the United States, then, to a whole series of little bleedings from the side in various parts of the world?

McNAMARA:

No, no, certainly not, quite the contrary. What it is designed to do, and what it is doing, I believe, is to deter the Soviets, or the Communists, from pressures that would lead to small bleedings. It permits the President to apply a fly swatter where a fly swatter is a proper weapon, instead of using a sledge hammer.

REASONER:

Do you believe that it has worked so far? For instance, do you think that's what worked in the Cuban situation?

McNAMARA:

Oh, there's no question about it in my mind. The Cuban situation is a perfect illustration of the application of this strategy and this forestructure, a forestructure founded on strategic nuclear power, by having available to it, the President, as Commander-in-Chief, the forces that were used in the case of Cuba -- naval forces that established the quarantine, air transport forces that were called up, you may remember, to provide the necessary foundation for an invasion, should that be necessary, and it was this combination of forces that eventually led Mr. Khrushchev to withdraw his offensive weapon systems from Cuba. And he withdrew, because he recognized superior force, and I think this is illustrative of the Soviet strategy. The Soviets will push against weakness and retreat in the face of superior strength.

(?)

REASONER:

The question of Cuba continues to come up. I think the latest statement on it is by a Russian, that there are no longer any offensive troops there, just a few training groups. Is that your information?

McNAMARA:

I don't believe that there are any offensive weapons systems in Cuba at this time. I'm quite confident, and I think that our continued surveillance proves this -- that all of the offensive weapons systems have been withdrawn. There do remain, I believe, certain Soviet technicians and training personnel, and it will be a --- a source of danger to the hemisphere until all Soviet forces are removed.

REASONER:

You mentioned Vietnam as being probably the most outstanding, current spot where this technique of covert aggression is being applied. I wonder, is this a case where, with our assistance, they might ^{the war in} win the battlefield and lose it in Saigon? Are you concerned about the practices of the Vietnamese government?

McNAMARA:

The current period is a difficult one to appraise. Certainly, instability has been accentuated in the last several weeks by the actions of the government. It is entirely possible that they have alienated important elements of the population, and unless the government and the population can --- can work together in a unified effort to defeat the Viet Cong, they won't be defeated.

REASONER: Is the Pentagon, or is the Defense Department, as an arm of the United States Government, attempting to influence the conduct of that government, or perhaps change its people?

McNAMARA: Our responsibility is a military responsibility, and we're doing everything we can to train and assist logistically the Vietnamese forces to make a maximum effort to overcome the Viet Cong. I think it's important to recognize it's a South Vietnamese war. It will be won or lost, depending upon what they do. We can advise and help, but they're responsible for the final results, and it remains to be seen how they'll continue to conduct that war. As the President said a few days ago, our policy is to support them in everything that acts to push toward winning the war, and to censor actions that -- that act to weaken their war effort.

ANNOUNCER:

The Secretary of Defense made that statement on the eve of his fact-finding trip to Vietnam where he is now.

Secretary McNamara's views on the new test ban treaty, chances of the outbreak of an accidental war, and an appraisal of Russia today, after this message.

COMMERCIAL

REASONER:

Mr. Secretary, we're recording this discussion about on the eve of the Senate vote on the nuclear test ban treaty. Everyone seems to assume it will pass, by the time this discussion is aired. You testified eloquently in favor of the treaty, but was your position the same as the Joint Chiefs, which is, that if it were not for the political advantages, you would object to it?

McNAMARA:

No, I don't believe that's a fair appraisal of the Joint Chiefs' position. The Joint Chiefs' position is that on balance, the treaty is very much in the interest of the United States and that's the same position that I take. They supported the treaty. I strongly favor it.

REASONER:

Do you see any real military disadvantage---does it hamper your job?

McNAMARA:

No, frankly I don't. Now, this is a relative position I'm speaking of, because it is true that the treaty will prevent further atmospheric tests of nuclear weapons and the effects of those weapons, but this is as much a restriction on the Soviets as it is on us, so I see no relative disadvantage accruing to the United States.

REASONER:

It's been suggested that it is not as much a restriction on them, because they had a longer preliminary series. There have been some rather far-out suggestions. For instance, suppose that the Soviets have developed a super bomb, which a cluster of bombs would freeze the electronic components of every Minuteman you've got in a silo --- stranger things have happened in the last fifty years, I guess. Does this kind of thing worry the Department?

McNAMARA:

Not at all. I read the same article -- you may have read in this morning's newspaper. It's pure fiction -- fantasy. There is no possibility that a Soviet bomb, no matter how large, could, under today's conditions, in any way kill or prevent from functioning effectively our nuclear weapons.

REASONER:


Could we win an all-out war?

McNAMARA:

It's absolutely impossible for any power to win a nuclear war, a strategic nuclear war. Were a war to be started by the Soviets by an attack on

the United States, using their strategic missiles and their heavy bombers, as I said, we have a system of hardened and dispersed missiles, Polaris submarines, B-52 and B-47 bombers and other weapons such that a sufficient number of those weapons would survive the Soviet surprise attack to literally be capable of destroying the Soviet Union. In the meantime, the Soviet Union undoubtedly would have attacked Western Europe with the medium range ballistic missiles that they have stationed on their western borders directed against Western Europe. The net effect of this exchange would probably be a hundred million casualties in the Soviet Union, perhaps fifty-plus million casualties in the United States, perhaps a hundred million casualties in Europe. There can be no winner to that kind of a situation.

REASONER:


Can you guarantee that this kind of thing will not start accidentally?

McNAMARA:

One of the most important steps that's been taken frankly, to prevent accidental war is the test ban treaty itself. The primary objective of that treaty, of course, is to prevent the---or retard the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Today, there are perhaps four nuclear powers, the United States, the United Kingdom, Soviet Union and France. Over the next decade, it would be entirely possible for perhaps ten other nations to develop and acquire nuclear weapons. Those nations, however, would be restricted---restricted in terms of technical resources, restricted in terms of financial resources. Almost certainly they would develop those weapons without the safety devices that we apply to ours and without taking the precautions that we take, both in the manufacture and in the operational deployment of our weapons. I have very little concern about accidental or inappropriate use of our weapons. I would have great fear, however, that if these ten nations

were to obtain nuclear weapons in the next ten years, that the danger of war by accident, or miscalculation would increase many times.

REASONER: I think it was John Foster Dulles who said at one point---there would come a day when the United States and Russia would look back nostalgically on the time when they feared only each other. Is that the kind of thing you mean?

McNAMARA: Yes, I think this is a fair way of stating it and I think therefore, that the test ban is not only very much in the interest of the United States and the Soviet Union, but very much in the interest of the entire world. It increases the security of the world.

REASONER: There seems to be a little paradox there. If one current nuclear power and one major potential nuclear power, China, are not included, doesn't this just tie our hands while they go ahead and develop---what might not be as sophisticated a force as we have, but might be terribly dangerous?

McNAMARA: I think that it's quite clear that if other nations develop ^{nuclear} forces, that endanger the United States we have a clear right under the treaty to resume nuclear testing in the atmosphere.

REASONER:

Sir, in connection with the nuclear test ban treaty, there was again an indication that some military forces---some military thinkers disagree with you. The Air Force Association, which has a semi-official standing, at least so far as indicating Air Force thinking, really blasted that treaty.

McNAMARA:

They did and I think the Secretary of the Air Forces^{and} blasted them back/quite properly so. Theirs was quite an irrational approach to the problem. Irrational in the sense they didn't have the intelligence information that's a necessary foundation of a reasoned decision on this very important national issue. I strongly concur in the Secretary of the Air Force's conclusion that the Air Force Association acted irresponsibly.

REASONER:

You're confident at the moment, that our intelligence information is good enough to act on?

McNAMARA:

I am and I don't wish to --- to disguise the problem of obtaining sufficient information of the activities of a closed society. It's very difficult indeed.

REASONER: This has been one of the areas where you've changed the setup. You've centralized the---

McNAMARA: Yes---yes---

REASONER: The Defense Intelligence Agency has been set up. Some military writers, Hanson Baldwin of the New York Times, for instance, believes that this has been---has had a net bad effect on American intelligence?

McNAMARA: He should talk to the Joint Chiefs. I think they would tell him it's had a net beneficial effect. Each of the services calculates the numbers of weapons that it needs to carry out its function and when the intelligence function is assigned to the same organization that's calculating the requirements, there's always a great danger, consciously or unconsciously---intelligence estimating an evaluation will become a tool of the requirements' calculator. We've separated that. The intelligence estimators now report directly to the Joint Chiefs of Staff. They are able to---to develop reasoned appraisals based on the raw material, the raw information brought to their attention. The Joint Chiefs, I believe, are entirely satisfied and pleased with the arrangement

and I'm delighted with it.

REASONER:

Mr. Secretary, the split between Russia and China, whatever significance it has, indicates trouble in one of the world's great system of alliances. We've based a good deal of our strategy since World War II on a system of alliances that sometimes seems a little creaky. There have been some real problems. At the time we were negotiating a nuclear test ban treaty, France was indicating strongly it would stay out of it and indicating in other ways that ^{it} isn't part of the NATO team to the extent that it was. And France is a key part of NATO.

McNAMARA:

We have our problems with France, but I don't think we should ever forget that at the time of the Cuban crisis, France was one of the first powers in the world to indicate unqualified support of our position.

REASONER:

And you think this would apply in other possible situations?

McNAMARA:

I do indeed. This is not to discount the penalties associated with the frictions that France introduces into NATO.

- REASONER: If we remember that they---they were ready to stand by at Cuba, we also have to remember that they have seemed to be wanting to stir up the pot in Vietnam. Is it possible that NATO works only in Europe?
- McNAMARA: NATO applies primarily to Europe and is oriented primarily to Europe.
- REASONER: But the spirit of it, presumably extends among allies?
- McNAMARA: I hope it does. Sometimes there are indications to the contrary.
- REASONER: Mr. Secretary, we've ranged over a wide variety of subjects and I suppose it's hard to come out with one impression. But if you had an impression about our opportunities or dangers for the next ten years, what would it be?
- McNAMARA: I think it's an impression of hope for greater stability, of hope for lowered tensions throughout the world.
- REASONER: Do you think that we are prepared to meet possible changes?

McNAMARA:

There's no question about it in my mind. The force structure that I've outlined to you, the tremendous increases in power which we've introduced, the immense superiority that we have in economic strength, in political strength, in military strength provides a foundation for us to look forward to the future with hope. As I said, I think the Soviets probe for weakness, to take advantage of weakness wherever they can push through when they find a weak spot. But also I believe that they retreat before strength. We have that strength. How far they will modify their objective of world domination I can't say. There are signs that they are beginning to modify it slightly. I think the test ban in itself is an illustration. The test ban is in large part a function of our strength. Without the strength as the foundation for negotiation I don't believe the test ban would have developed. What will follow I don't know. There are some interesting events taking place in the Soviet Union. For example, you may have read Yevtushenko's recent autobiography, published a few weeks ago. As you know, he's a thirty-year-old Soviet poet and perhaps you'd like to see two or three of the passages

that struck me as extremely interesting and indicative of some of the trends (they may be minor trends, but they're important trends) in Soviet society. Yevtushenko, at one point, is talking of a meeting he had with Pasternak, the famous Soviet poet-author of Dr. Zhivago, shortly before Pasternak died. And he relates this story that Pasternak told him. Pasternak said that "such a funny thing happened to me today. A roofer I know came to see me. He pulled a bottle of vodka out of his pocket, and a piece of sausage, and he said 'I did some work on your roof the other day, but I didn't know who you were. Now some good people tell me you stand for the truth. That deserves a celebration, so let's have a drink to it.' We had a drink, and then the roofer said to me, 'Well, now, you lead the way.' I couldn't understand what he meant at first. 'Where am I do lead you,' I said. 'To fight for the truth,' he said. 'You'll have to show the way.'" And then on this same theme, a little later, Yevtushenko is reporting a visit to a factory in the Soviet Union. He said, "I read poetry" (a rather odd thing to do to factory workers, I think) but "I read poetry to workers in a factory during their

lunch hour. Both men and women listened for nearly the whole hour, forgetting their sandwiches, and at the end of the reading a woman came up to me and said in a low voice, 'Just write the truth, son, just the truth; look for the truth in yourself and take it to the people.'" And then he sums up, I think, his whole point I'm trying to make, in a very short paragraph when he ~~says~~^{said}, "There's no doubt that it's spring. It's a rough spring, a difficult spring, with late frosts and cold wind, a spring which takes a step to the left and then a step to the right and then a step back, but which is certain nevertheless to go on and take two or three steps forward. And the fact that winter should hold the earth so desperately in its grip and refuse to give it up is also quite in the order of things. But then in the very counter attacks of winter one can sense its growing impotence because times have changed." Now I don't know that I accept his word that times have changed in the Soviet Union, but there are some signs of change, and I suspect that we can expect some further changes. How far they'll go I don't know. I'm very much inclined to the view which Walt Rostow expresses in the current issue of "Foreign Affairs", you may have seen it

or seen reference to it. He describes a series of Soviet offensives against the West since the end of World War II; he picks the period of 1946 through 1951 as the major Stalin offensive, and that was ended with the Korean War, for example. And he refers to the period of 1958 to 1962, a period again of a Soviet offensive that started with Sputnik and terminated with the withdrawal of the offensive weapon systems from Cuba; and he says that these two major offensives were associated with two and perhaps what is now a third offensive to probe for possible ways of reducing tensions between the Communists and the West. And these probes for reductions of tensions may indicate a recognition by Khrushchev that he has to choose between two courses: he has to choose between a course directed toward world domination, directed toward extending the influence of the Communists beyond the boundaries of the Soviet Union, a course that they appear to have been following over most of the last four decades. That course, on the one hand, versus a course of action that's in the interests of the Soviet people, a course of action that will lead to a rising standard of living, to greater personal freedom.

rising

I suspect that that/standard of living and these hints that there are some loosening of the fetters on personal liberty will in themselves push the Soviet leaders some way away from world domination toward a course of action that has the interests of the Soviet Union and the interests of its people as its foundation. How far they'll go, I don't know. I'm very much inclined to think that we must follow the President's thought, which he has expressed many times -- you may remember he said 'We must never negotiate from fear, but we should never fear to negotiate.' That seems to me to be the foundation of our policy today and the road for the future. And, of course, there is a corollary to that: such a policy depends on strength and, therefore, we must continue to maintain and increase our military strength and keep our powder dry.

REASONER:

But if somebody comes knocking at the door with an olive branch, you don't want to shoot him?

McNAMARA:

No, but I want to have a secure door between me and the carrier of the olive branch, until I see what lies behind it.

REASONER: Thank you very much, Mr. Secretary.

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